

CLAIMS

1. A method of discovering a network node, the method comprising the steps of:
transmitting an access request from the network node to a network server of a computer network, the network being arranged for coupling the network node to the computer network,

transmitting a discovery request from the network server to a discovery server, the discovery request comprising an identifier of the network node, and

performing a discovery procedure of the network node by the discovery server using the identifier.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising processing the access request by the network server and generating the discovery request by the network server after acceptance of the access request.
3. The method of claim 1, whereby the access request is a log on request.
4. The method of claim 3, the network server being a domain controller.
5. The method of claim 1, whereby the access request is an Internet protocol address request.
6. The method of claim 5, the network server being a dynamic host configuration protocol server.
7. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

storing a time stamp of the access request by the network server,

responding to a subsequent access request received by the network server by transmitting a subsequent discovery request in response to the subsequent access request only if the subsequent access request is separated by at least a predetermined amount of time from the time stamp.
8. The method of claim 1, the discovery procedure comprising polling the network node to discover at least one of network topology, network node type, network node status and network node configuration information.
9. A method of coupling a user device to a computer network, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving an access request from the user device by a network server of the computer network, the network server being arranged for coupling the user device to the computer network, and

sending a discovery request from the network server to a discovery server to request a discovery procedure to be performed by the discovery server for the network node.

10. The method of claim 9, the user device being a portable client computer and the access request being a log on request.
11. The method of claim 9, the user device being a computer peripheral and the access request being an Internet protocol address request.
12. The method of claim 9, further comprising:

receiving a subsequent access request from the network node, the subsequent access request being for renewed coupling of the network node to the computer network,

determining whether the renewed access request is spaced from the access request by at least a predetermined amount of time; and

if the renewed access request is spaced from the access request by at least the predetermined amount of time, sending a renewed discovery request to the discovery server to request a renewed discovery procedure to be performed for the network node.

13. The method of claim 9, further comprising processing the access request by the network server and generating the discovery request by the network server if the access request has been accepted by the network server.
14. The method of claim 9, further comprising temporarily coupling the network node to the computer network by a docking station.

15. A storage medium or device storing a computer program for initiating a discovery procedure for a network node, the computer program causing the network to perform a method comprising:

receiving an access request from the network node for coupling the network node to the computer network, and

generating a discovery request for initiating a discovery procedure for the network node in response to the access request.

16. The storage medium or device of claim 15, wherein the program is adapted to determine whether a subsequent access request, which is received after the access request, is spaced from the access request by at least a predetermined amount of time, whereby the discovery request is only generated if the subsequent access request is spaced from the access request by at least a predetermined amount of time.

17. The storage medium or device of claim 15, wherein the program is adapted to time stamp the access request.

18. A storage medium or device storing a computer program for performing a discovery procedure, the computer program being arranged for performing steps including:

receiving a discovery request from a network server, the discovery request comprising an identifier of a network node, and

performing a discovery procedure for the network node using the identifier.

19. The storage medium or device of claim 18, wherein the program is adapted to store identifiers of network nodes in a buffer memory.

20. The storage medium or device of claim 19, wherein the program means is adapted to perform the discovery procedure by polling the network node.

21. A network server for coupling a network node to a computer network, the network server being arranged for:

receiving an access request from the network node, and

sending a discovery request to a discovery server in response to the access request, the discovery request comprising an identifier of the network node.

22. A domain controller comprising an authentication component for processing an access request from a network node and a discovery initiation component for generating a discovery request in response to successful authentication of the network node by the authentication component.
23. The domain controller of claim 22, the access request being a log on request and the authentication component being a log on component.
24. A dynamic host configuration protocol server comprising:
 - a dynamic host configuration protocol component for coupling an IP address to a network node in response to an IP address request received from the network node, and
 - a discovery initiation component for generating a discovery request in response to the IP address request, the discovery request comprising the IP address to enable a discovery server to perform a discovery procedure for the network node identified by the IP address.
25. The dynamic host configuration protocol server of claim 24, the discovery initiation component being arranged to generate the discovery request only if at least a predetermined amount of time has passed since a previous discovery request for the network node.
26. A discovery server comprising:
 - a memory component for storing an IP address received as part of a discovery request from a dynamic host configuration protocol server, and
 - a discovery program component for performing a discovery procedure of a network node being identified by the IP address stored in the memory component in response to the discovery request.
27. The discovery server of claim 26, the discovery program component being arranged to perform the discovery procedure by polling the network node.